

# **Message from Sarah Cracknell**

## **Growing the Rural Church Project Manager**

### **Diocese of Exeter**

As more and more village facilities are having to close because of Corvid19 we want to reassure those isolated and vulnerable in rural communities of how their village church is there to help.

Across Devon we have a network of churches providing a Christian presence in every community. They offer a vital service to their communities to address isolation, loneliness, depression, health and welfare. Churches across Devon are responding to the situation in a range of ways; support network groups are being established, food bank boxes are being set up in church porches and many are looking at ways of being able to hold virtual coffee mornings and finding other ways to address concerns around loneliness and anxiety. The support that our village churches are offering is open and available to ALL. In addition, for those who are healthy and low risk and want to feel they are supporting their communities there will be opportunities to volunteer safely to support others.

There is a network of clergy and lay ministers within every community. We would encourage anyone in need or who is anxious or who wish to offer help to contact their local clergy to find out what support is available in your community. You can find out who your local clergy is by checking your postcode on

<https://www.achurchnearyou.com>

Although church services have been suspended because of the risks associated with Corvid19, all our churches are being encouraged to remain open as buildings available for people to access individually for prayer and reflection.

Best wishes,

Sarah Cracknell

Growing the Rural Church Project Manager

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